SIMON *and* MARY.

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE

OF A

SERMON

Preached in EXETER,

In the YEAR 1744.

By *JOHN CENNICK.*

He ſaith, I will have Mercy upon whom I will have Mercy; and I will have Compaſſion on whom I will have Compaſſion, Rom. ix. 15. *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice,* Matt. xii. 7. *His Mercy endureth for ever,* Pſalm cvi. 1.

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A

BRITISH MUSEUM

LUKE vii. 48.

Jeſus ſaid unto her, Thy Sins are forgiven.

A Certain Phariſee, named *Simon*, had invited our Saviour to dine with him, and according to his Cuſtom he went; for though our Saviour did not approve of the falſe Righteouſneſs of that Sect, but was always diſpleaſed at the Manner of their expounding the Law, whereby they made it poſſible for a Man to keep it, ſo as to eſcape the Curſes of it, and merit Heaven by his Works, and ſo ſtand blameleſs before God; whereas they were thereby only outwardly clear like a whited Wall, or painted Sepulchre, and needed the Blood of Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs to make them all-glorious within, and to be without Spot before God, and without which no one is freed from the Curſe of the Law, or is indeed righteous or holy in God's Sight; yet I ſay, though in this weighty Manner the Phariſees ſtopped ſo ſhort, and were ignorant of the Righteouſneſs of God by Faith, and deſpiſed others who had none of their Self-Righteouſneſs, when any of theſe aſked our Saviour to come into their Houſes he went, and ſhewed how willing he was Good and Bad ſhould be ſaved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth. "He ſends the Rain upon the Juſt and Unjuſt, and cauſes his Sun to riſe upon the Evil and upon the Good," and would have both be happy. He would

have the Self-Righteous and High-minded be humbled, and leave all their Self-wrought Stuff, and obtain of him Raiment that they might be cloathed and have on the true Robe of Salvation, the Wedding Garment, becauſe he knew well, however ſpecious and fine all others might appear in Men's Eyes, it could not ſtand the fiery Trial which muſt try every Man's Work; and on the other Hand, he would have the Careleſs and the Diſobedient reformed, and leave all their Sins and Follies, and come and waſh in his Blood, and put on his Righteouſneſs, and ſo eſcape the Judgment of the Great Day. This Mind of our Saviour's is every where viſible in the Holy Scriptures, and with this View he ſometimes entered public Sinner's Houſes, ſuch as *Zaccheus*'s Houſe at *Jericho*, and was a Gueſt with a Man that was a Sinner: Another Time he ſits down with the Publican *Levi*, and now he goes to be a Gueſt with one of the ſtricteſt Sect of the *Jewiſh* Religion. Indeed the laſt is more to be admired than the Former. Poor Sinners wanted a Saviour; and therefore, when they heard him preach, and offer his Grace ſo freely, no Wonder they prayed him to come into their Hearts and Houſes: They wanted juſt ſuch a Saviour, and he came on Purpoſe from Heaven to ſeek and ſave ſuch loſt Sheep. But that the Phariſees could invite him to their Houſes was a real Wonder; they deſpiſed his Free-Grace, and Righteouſneſs, and thought they were well enough already: They thought, we are rich, and have need of nothing; but happily ſome of theſe are drawn to Jeſus, and like St. *Paul* ſee, that all their Goodneſs is like the Morning Dew, and even Dung and Droſs, and will ſo eſteem it, that they may win Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs.

It

It ſeems as if the Holy Jeſus had loved *Simon*, and had ordered the whole Matter ſo, that he might ſee an Inſtance of his free Love, and hear the Goſpel, and be awakened to feel his real Need of a better Righteouſneſs than his own, and therefore would that Day come into his Houſe.

While he was ſitting at Table with him, a poor Woman call'd *Mary*, a notorious Sinner, who, it is like, had heard him preach, followed him in; and when ſhe was got behind him, ſhe fell down weeping upon his Feet, and kiſſing them, and anointed them with Ointment, and in this Poſture ſhe continued till our Saviour mercifully ſaid to her, "Thy Sins are forgiven."

The Manner in which ſhe found Pardon, and ſome Particulars relating to this bleſſed Act of our Lord's gracious dealing with her, is not ſo fully recorded by any other Evangeliſt as by St. *Luke*, and is worthy of our ſtricteſt Attention.

As St. *Luke* was not of the Twelve, but wrote his Goſpel, as himſelf tells us, from what he heard of the Apoſtles and other Witneſſes by Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles, which were confirmed to him by thoſe who ſaw and were preſent when he did the Things of which he writes, ſo it was eaſy for him to be leſs exact in the Order of ſetting down ſome memorable Paſſages; and neither is it material therein to be ſo particular and punctual, ſince the main Thing aimed at through all the Goſpel, is the Grace and Mercy of God our Saviour, which muſt be teſtified to every Creature under Heaven, and a Relation of thoſe mighty Works which he did in the Days of his Fleſh, that by hearing this, other Sinners might be brought to him, and believe on him to the ſaving of their Souls.

The Reaſon of this Remark is, becauſe the other three Evangeliſts mention this Woman's coming to our Saviour and anointing him, and they two agree it was in the Houſe of *Simon* the Leper in *Bethany*, only they make it to have happened not many Days before the laſt Paſſover when Jeſus ſuffered; and St. *Luke* gives us an Account of it in the beginning of his Goſpel. Some think this Account of St. *Luke*'s, and that of the other three, ſhould be underſtood of two different Anointings, and by two different Women, the firſt *Mary Magdalen*, the ſecond *Mary* the Siſter of *Lazarus*; but I rather believe all the Accounts are of one and the ſame Time and Perſon: However, as my Deſign is not to criticiſe, or ſcrutinize into the leſs material Part of the divine Hiſtory, but to ſpeak of the Act of Grace vouchſafed to a poor guilty Woman, I ſhall ſay no more on this Matter, but paſs on to execute my Purpoſe.

We are told, in the 36th Verſe, that a Phariſee had Jeſus to eat with him, and he was gone into his Houſe, and at Meat when the Woman came in.

Here we may obſerve, as I ſaid before, that though the Phariſees were a ſelf-righteous and opiniated Sect of People, and who had perverted the very Meaning of the Law with falſe Gloſſes and Explanations, ſo that they juſtly fell under the ſevereſt Woes pronounced by our Saviour, yet when one of theſe wanted him to come into his Houſe, Jeſus went. His Buſineſs was with all Sorts, with the Self-righteous, "to bring down the High from their Seats;" and with the Sinners, to ſhew them Salvation, "and exalt them of low Degree."

A Woman of the City, notorious for Crimes and Sins, followed him in. Some of the Fathers ſay

ſhe had heard him preach about the Loſt Sheep, and I ſuppoſe was ſo affected, that, forgetting the Phariſees utter Abhorrance of ſuch People, ſhe ventured into the Houſe: Or if ſhe had remembered how they would not ſuffer a Sinner to touch them, or come near them, yet as her Caſe was ſo deplorable and heavy, ſhe might eaſily think, What ſhall I do? This good Shepherd only can help me: He can but ſpurn me away, or bid me depart; and who knows? May be he may have Mercy upon me; I will go in after him, guilty and miſerable as I am, and fall down vile as the Dirt under his Feet." Juſt ſo once *Heſter* thought, when her own Life, and the Life of her People, was at Stake: Upon Pain of Death none might ſpeak with the King; and, if ſhe did not get to him, ſhe knew all their Lives would be loſt in a little Time; and therefore ſhe ſaid, "I can but periſh, and if I periſh, I will periſh at the King's Feet: This ſaid, ſhe ventured in, and obtained Mercy for herſelf and all the *Jews*: And thus it was when four *Samaritan* Lepers waited in a periſhing Condition without the Gates of *Samaria*: They ſaid one to another, "If we go into the City, the Famine is there; and if we continue here, we ſhall die: Let us go and fall into the Hands of the *Aſſyrians*, we can but die: and peradventure they may ſave us alive." And this venturing was the happy Means of ſaving themſelves, and all the City of *Samaria* from dying with Hunger; ſo then might *Mary* conclude, If I go back to the old Courſe, I periſh certainly: if I continue in this State, awakened to ſee my Guilt and Miſery, and am not helped, I ſhall alſo periſh; my Sins are grievous to me, the Burthen of them is intolerable: I can but be caſt away, I will go and worſhip at his Feet, perhaps the King of *Iſrael* is a merciful King,

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and will ſave my Soul alive. I know there are many People whoſe Eyes the Lord has opened, they know their fallen and lamentable Eſtate and are afraid: Some of theſe, inſtead of ſeeking Mercy, turn back into the World, and after they have hardened their Hearts, and blinded their Eyes, and made themſelves like the deaf Adder, which refuſeth to hear the Voice of the Charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely; they become twice dead, and have their latter End worſe than the Beginning. Others, like the Door upon the Hinges, move, but not out of the ſame Place; they are often affected, and ſeem in Earneſt about their Salvation, and anon are back in all their Filthineſs and Sins again: But others, the wiſeſt of all, haſten to the Wounds of Jeſus Chriſt; and are reſolved, if they periſh, to periſh at his Feet; theſe are they who often thus ſave themſelves, and others that hear them: For none, however loaded with Sin and oppreſſed, however ſpoiled and undone by Satan, came to our Saviour and went away unhelped. Of this Truth, this Woman in the Text was a happy Witneſs.

It is ſaid, "ſhe ſtood at his Feet behind him weeping." She could not for Shame ſtand before him, ſhe knew what a Wretch ſhe had been, her Guilt ſtared her in the Face, and a Senſe of her ſad Eſtate made her weep. At laſt ſhe ſinks down at his Feet, and as her Tears flowed upon them, ſhe wiped them off with her Hair. I ſuppoſe all Jeſus ſaid at Table affected her more and more; every Word, I dare ſay, went to the Heart, and the Holy Ghoſt, who had begun the good Work, doubtleſs, gave her to feel who Jeſus was, and that "he was come to ſave *Iſrael* from all his Sins." This Senſe of

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his Grace, together with a Senſe of her ſinful Life, could melt her hard Heart, and cauſe the Tears to flow faſt down; and when his Feet were quite wet and waſhed therewith, ſhe might think, O I am unworthy that my polluted Tears ſhould touch his ſacred Feet; and then ſhe wiped them off with her Hair, and kiſſed them, perhaps thinking in her Heart, Theſe are the dear Feet of that Shepherd who has left his Ninety nine in the Wilderneſs to come and ſeek and ſave me; theſe are the bleſſed Feet which have been weary and ſore with Journies and travelling in Search of the loſt Sheep me; and again ſhe kiſſed them, and new Floods of Tears overſtreamed them.

While this was doing, the Phariſee, *Simon*, was ſadly offended with our dear Saviour: He queſtioned if he even was a prophet? and thought, if he was, he would know who that Woman is, and concluded, if he had been a good Man, a righteous Perſon, he would not ſuffer her to come near him. Poor Man! he little thought what a Saviour the Son of God was: He did not know that he was come to ſave that which was loſt, and to be a Friend of Sinners; and had he only have known the Depth of his own Heart, he had neither deſpiſed the Woman, nor been offended with Jeſus, but, in deepeſt Shame and Abaſement, he had proſtrated himſelf before him, and begged, "God be merciful to me a Sinner! It is a horrid and fearful Thing to ſuppoſe, becauſe one has lived a ſtrict Life, gone to Church, received the Sacraments, and done much Good, that therefore one is righteous. Such was the Righteouſneſs of Scribes and Phariſees, and againſt ſuch our Lord Jeſus inveighed ſo earneſtly, telling his Diſciples, "I ſay to you, except your Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of Scribes

and Phariſees, you can in no Caſe enter the Kingdom of Heaven. All the Righteouſneſs of Men, all our Works, our Duties, our Alms, and pious Deeds, is but Self-righteouſneſs. It is but garniſhing the Tomb and beautifying the Sepulchre. It is whitening the Wall, and making clean the Outſide of the Cup and Platter. It is at beſt but the Righteouſneſs of Works, the Righteouſneſs of the Law, and by which "no Fleſh can be juſtified." This is what God calls, in *Iaiah*, filthy Rags, a polluted Cloth, and ſays, It ſhall not profit thee. All this and more St. *Paul* had, before ever he was a Chriſtian, and becauſe he knew the Diſciples ſpoke againſt depending on ſuch a ſandy Foundation, he thought, they ſpoke blaſphemous Words againſt Moſes and the Law, and perſecuted to the utmoſt all of that Way; but when is Eyes were opened, no one was more zealous to ſet at Nought all other Righteouſneſs but the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and this was the Reaſon why Publicans and Harlots entered the Kingdom before the Self-righteous. The latter falſly concluded, they were good and righteous, and better than others, and ſo reſted without Chriſt and his Merits; but the former, when they heard the Preaching, knew they had no Righteouſneſs, and came as guilty and loſt Souls to our Saviour and obtained Mercy, and he became the Lord their Righteouſneſs. This was indeed the Caſe with *Mary*, and this was the Caſe of *Simon*. He was ignorant of his fallen Condition by Nature, and knew he had not done the Crimes ſhe had done, and ſo ſuppoſed himſelf better, and one who had leſs, far leſs to be forgiven. This led him to deſpiſe the Sinner, and to be offended with his Lord. This is the Caſe of many in the World, they deſ-

piſe

piſe others as the Dogs of the Flock, and are themſelves equally in as dangerous a State, and do not know it; but think like *Laodiceans*, as they are, "I am rich, I am increaſed with Goods, I have Need of nothing, and are verily poor, and miſerable, and blind, and naked."

Our Saviour knew *Simon*'s Thoughts, and watched all that paſſed in the weeping Sinner *Mary*, and therefore ſaid *Simon*, "I have ſomewhat to ſay to thee;" and he ſaid, Maſter, ſay on. I ſuppoſe poor *Mary* liſtened eagerly to all that proceeded out of his Mouth, and now more eſpecially. Jeſus ſaid, "there was, in a certain City, a Creditor which had two Debtors; one owed him five hundred Pence, and the other fifty." Immediately the poor Women felt the Meaning; ſhe thought, Thou Jeſus art the Creditor, and I and *Simon* are the two Debtors; *Simon* owes him fifty, but I five Hundred: And now ſhe might juſtly expect to hear him ſay, when they had nothing to pay, he caſt them into Priſon; but, to her eternal Joy, he ſaid, "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave all: Which of them will love him moſt? And *Simon* anſwered, I ſuppoſe him to whom he forgave moſt: And Jeſus ſaid, Thou haſt rightly judged." O how did her Heart bound and leap for Joy at hearing this! She wept Tears of Grief before, but now they were Tears of Joy that fell upon his Feet. She ſaw the Doctrine of Free-Grace, and believed in unmerited Mercy, and now more than ever ſhe kiſſed his Feet and anointed them with precious Ointment; and now Jeſus turned to the Woman: This was what ſhe had wanted: She longed for a tender Look, for a Smile from that Face of his, he turned: It is not ſaid, ſhe then roſe and ſtood before him; no, the Hour of her Deliverance was come: He turned and looked

upon her, and ſaid, Seeſt thou this Woman, *Simon*? and if he had ſaid, Behold this poor polluted Harlot, this wicked and wandering Child, "her Sins, that are many, are forgiven her!" She muſt be overcome with Joy and Tranſport, for the Kingdom of God was come to her; ſhe felt Redemption, and was ſaved. We do not hear that ſhe had prayed a Word, or uſed any Intreaties; no, perhaps ſhe had never prayed in her Life, and did not know how to ſpeak for Shame and Trouble; but her Heart prayed, Jeſus heard the unutterable Sighs of her Heart, and her Tears ſpoke the Language of her thirſty and needy Soul: And here it would not be amiſs to obſerve, that when a poor oppreſſed Soul cannot ſpeak, or do not know how to pray, Jeſus ſees the Bottom of the Heart, and the Deſires and Pantings of an awakened Soul are of more Weight with him than ten thouſand fine Words, or well-compoſed Prayers, or whole Burnt-offerings or Sacrifices. But to return: Jeſus looked upon her, and ſaid to *Simon*, "When I entered into thine Houſe thou gaveſt me no Water for my Feet, but this Woman has waſhed my Feet with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hair of her Head. Thou gaveſt me no Kiſs, but ſhe has not ceaſed to kiſs my Feet. My Head with Oil thou didſt not anoint, but ſhe has anointed my Feet with Ointment." None who ſtood by could have ſuppoſed that the Lord had taken any Notice of the Woman; but when they ſaw him ſpeaking to *Simon*, and purſuing his Diſcourſe to thoſe who ſat at Meat with him, it ſeemed as if he had not obſerved any thing ſhe did; but ſee, he had duly remarked all from firſt to laſt. His Heart had yearned over her from Everlaſting, and all the Days of her ſinning his Eyes watched her and longed to be gracious. He was come indeed to

the World to save her among the lost Sheep of the House of *Israel*, and to bring her back to the Shepherd and Bishop of her Soul; and neither was her Desires and Sighs for Salvation any other than the Effects of his own Love. His Spirit had drawn her to him, and every Tear she had shed he observed and counted. He felt her real Grief, and her kissing his Feet he noticed, and how she wiped them and anointed them with Spikenard. All this is evident and clear from his Expostulation with *Simon*. It was all as if he had said, *Simon*, this Woman, in the Bottom of her Heart, believes she is more indebted to me five hundred Times than thou art; She knows her Sins are many, and her Faults innumerable; it is therefore the glad News of Mercy is such a Gospel to her, therefore she cleaves to me so close for Help, therefore she is so ashamed and humbled, and now when I forgive her she loves me more. When I came into thy House, how coldly was I received? Thou gavest me no Kiss to welcome me. O hadst thou known the Want of a Saviour, or believed what a Guest thou hast this Day with thee, thou wouldest not, thou couldest not have forbore to kiss me. Thou wouldest have fallen down at my Feet and wondered at that Mercy of Mercies, and thought the God of the whole Earth comes to me! But this poor Woman, whom Satan and her Lusts have led Captive these many Years, see how glad she is of a Saviour, how thankful and happy she is at my Feet! How have I been welcomed by her? Since I came in, she has not ceased to kiss my Feet. Thou also gavest me no Water to wash my Feet. The Reason was, Thou hast not known that all the Angels have rejoiced to wait on me: Thou hast not known who I, the Son of Man, am, or thou wouldest have counted it the

greatest

greateſt Honour to be my Servant and waſh my Feet? But this Woman, whom thou ſo deſpiſeſt, knows me; my Father in Heaven has taught her, and therefore ſhe cometh to me. See how her Tears are poured out on my Feet, and how ſhe wipes them with the Hair of her Head. How is that proud Spirit of the Harlot humbled in the Duſt! How is that Head (once liſted up haughty and whoriſh, deckt with Ornaments and Finery to allure Men to ſin with her) abaſed at my Feet! Thoſe Eyes, which once darted impure Flame, now ſee how they are Fountains, and aſhamed to look up. Her all, her very precious Ointment ſhe beſtows upon my Feet, and loves me much, becauſe much is forgiven her. Think only, *Simon*, if I ſhould pardon thee with thy few Sins, and her with her many, how little Love or Thanks I ſhould get from thee, and how much from her: In this thou erreſt, and ſuppoſeſt that thou haſt but a little to be forgiven; whereas thou, in thy Heart and in thy Nature, art the ſame Sinner; and thy Hypocriſy and Pride are as abominable in my Eyes as her Uncleanneſs and Lewdneſs have been.

"And he ſaid to her, Thy Sins are forgiven." It is remarkable we do not hear that *Simon* aſked this Mercy, or that Jeſus ever ſaid thus to him; but it appears rather as if he continued yet offended, and reaſoned with the reſt if he did not blaſpheme in ſaying, "Thy Sins are forgiven."

It ſeems as if *Simon* had heard and ſeen the Piety of our Saviour, and reſpected him upon that Account; perhaps he had thought this Man may do a great deal of Good to the vile and common People, and others who are not of the ſtrict Sect of the *Phariſees*; but, doubtleſs, he did not receive him as if he himſelf wanted his Help, or to be ſaved by him:

him: No, he expected rather Jesus should praise him for his strict Life, and with Scorn and Contempt, and with Threatenings, reduce to Obedience. He, no doubt, was conscious of his Failing in some Points, but he thought it was but a little: He was like the rest of that Sort who "thanked God that he was no Drunkard, Extortioner, &c. nor even like the Publicans;" and this made him receive our Saviour and his Doctrine so coldly: Had he only been truly convinced of Sin, and seen how all Sins come out of the Heart, and that our whole Nature is corrupt and abominable, and our best Works and Duties are spoiled and stained with Sin, he certainly had not so behaved. He would not have thought of any being greater Sinners than himself; but, knowing his own wicked Heart and the secret Stirring of Lust and Pride, he would have met our Saviour with a Heart overflowing with Joy, and kissed his Feet, and thanked him that he would bring Salvation into his House, and help and save him from all his Sin.

On the other Hand, the only Reason why the Woman received him so thankfully was, she knew her lost State, she had no false Righteousness to depend on; she wanted a Saviour; and now she had found him, she worships him, kisses his Feet, weeps and is overcome with Joy.

As Bread to a Man dying with Hunger is sweet, and Water to one perishing with Thirst, so is a Saviour's Presence and his tender Mercies to a Soul conscious of his Sin, and who is awakened in his Heart, and has forever done attempting to clear himself, or persuade himself that he is good or righteous, but knows I am undone, and spoiled, and lost, unless God Almighty, through free Mercy, look upon me and save me. O no Tongue can express how

much

mued ſuch long to have our Saviour turn to them and ſay, "Thy Sins, that are many, are forgiven thee." If any among you, who hear me To-day, are in this Caſe, if you feel your Sin, and want a Saviour, draw near and fall before the Son of Man: "It is a true Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into World to ſave Sinners." Do not be affrighted becauſe you cannot pray rightly, or as ſome can, you want a Saviour the more: Look how the Woman did, and go and do likewiſe. Let your Tears and Sighs ſpeak the Language of your Heart, and know the God with whom you have to do, the Lamb to whom you come, has Eyes like a Flame of Fire. He ſees your Hearts, and knows better what you want than you know yourſelves. You muſt not think he loves long Prayers, or will hear becauſe of your much ſpeaking. He ties the Heart and the Reins, and liſtens to the ſofteſt Aſpirations and Sighs for Mercy. Open your Breaſts before him continually, and this you can do as well in the Field, in the Shop, in the Houſe, in the Bed, or with Company, or alone, or Sick, or in Health, as if you were on your Knees in the Cloſet, or praying in the great Congregation. This is to pray always. Do this then and leave not the other undone, and you ſhall find what a Heart Jeſus has. When he had a Mind to ſave this Woman, for a while he ſeemed as if he did not ſee her, and behaved as if he did not regard her Tears or Kiſſes; but how happy an Anſwer did ſhe at laſt obtain: "Go in Peace, thy Faith has ſaved thee, thy Sins are forgiven." Juſt ſo when *Saul* was awakened in his Journey to *Damaſcus*, for a Time he ſeemed to be forſaken and diſregarded, and this ſo pained him, that he could neither eat or drink till God haſtened away *Ananias*

to

to him with the glad News of his Sins being washed away. When *Ananias* would have pleaded with *Jesus* against going, because he was afraid of him, he says to him, "Make haste, for behold he prayeth;" as if he would have said, "I cannot bear his Sighs, and Tears, and Cries, make haste, must help him: Tell him to arise and wash away his Sins, calling upon the Name of the Lord." It has been our dear Saviour's Manner of acting, he hides his Face and we are troubled; but he says, "For a little Moment have I hid myself from thee, but with everlasting Mercies will I gather thee." Be not therefore discouraged, whatever your Circumstances are: However your are distressed or burthened, whatever Fears or Doubts trouble you, bring all to the Feet of Jesus Christ, and there abide till he has said in your Heart, "Thy Sins are forgiven," till like *Mary* you can weep for Joy, and kiss his Feet here and in Eternity.

But before I conclude this Discourse, I shall speak upon this Doctrine of Forgiveness of Sin, and prove, that we receive Forgiveness of our Sin in this World, and that we can most surely know our Sins are forgiven.

Above all things, I wonder that Men who read the Scripture daily, and hear it read continually, venture to affirm, We must not expect to be forgiven in this World, and if we are forgiven here, yet we cannot know it. I know well this Doctrine pleases our common Enemy, for this may settle some upon their Lees, almost persuaded to be Christians, and others never concern themselves about looking after Pardon, since it cannot be found in this World, and so when they come to die (they think) it will be Time enough for them. Unbelief

and pure Infidelity is at the Bottom of the Whole, elſe as Remiſſion of Sin is ſo often promiſed to him that believeth in the Scripture, Men would not dare ſay we cannot obtain it here in this World, but with all Earneſtneſs would ſeek it and find it.

St. *Peter* ſays, "Through this Man's Name, whoſoever believeth ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins," Acts x. 43. Again he ſays, "The Promiſe of Forgiveneſs of Sins and the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt is unto you and unto your Children, and unto them that are far off, even to as many as the Lord our God ſhall call," Acts ii. 38, 39. The Scriptures were therefore written, and the Goſpel preached, that we might repent and believe, and have our Sins blotted out; and it is the Bleſſedneſs of which *David* in the *Pſalms*, and St. *Paul* in the Epiſtle to the *Romans* ſpeaks of when they ſay, "Bleſſed is that Man whoſe Iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe Sins are covered," Pſalm xxxii. Rom. iv. 7. *Iſaiah*'s Prophecy and that of *Ezekiel*'s too are filled with Promiſes of this Kind; and *David* certainly knew it fulfilled in himſelf when he ſays, "Thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my Sin," Pſalm xxxii. 5. And again, "Praiſe the Lord, O my Soul, who forgiveth all thy Sins, and healeth all thy Infirmities," Pſalm ciii. 3. The Angel told *Iſaiah*, "Thy Iniquity is taken away, and thy Sin is purged," Iſaiah vi. 7. *Hezekiah* ſays, "The Lord out of Love to my Soul has caſt all my Sins behind his Back," Iſaiah xxxviii. 17. To *Joſhua* it was ſaid, "Behold I have cauſed thy Iniquity to paſs from thee," Zech. iii. 4. So to the Man ſick of the Palſy, Jeſus ſaid, "Son, thy Sins are forgiven thee," Mark ii. 5. St. *Paul* ſays, "He has forgiven you all Treſpaſſes," Col. ii. 13. And again, "We have Redemption in his Blood, even

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the Remiſſion of our Sins," Epheſ. i. 7. St. *John* ſays, "I have written to you becauſe your Sins are forgiven you," 1 John ii. 12. If our Saviour ever forgave Sins he does now, and to the End of the World. The Son of Man has not loſt the Power to forgive Sins upon Earth. He is the ſole High-Prieſt, and abſolves, and waſhes, and makes clean whom he will. His Blood has the ſame Effect now as formerly to cleanſe us from all Sins; and as I ſaid before, pure Unbelief is the Cauſe of any one's denying ſo precious a Doctrine. The Evaſion ſome uſe, who ſay we may be forgiven and never know it, is inſufferable. Can a loaded Man be eaſed of his Burdens and he not know it? Can the Sick be cured and he not be ſenſible of it? Can the Priſoner be releaſed and be ignorant of it? Or the Leper be cleanſed and he not the wiſer? Then is it all Fancy, and not real; but if the Sick, the Leper, the Heavy-Laden muſt know when they are delivered, ſo muſt the Souls known when the Lord Jeſus has done away their Iniquity. The Heart feels his Words Spirit and Life, and rejoiceth that he has given them the Knowledge of their Salvation by the Remiſſion of their Sins.

It would depreciate and undervalue the Work of the Holy Ghoſt, to ſuppoſe he can apply the Blood of Chriſt, waſh and pardon a Soul, and leave it inſenſible of the great Mercy. Nor could we thank the Lord, or praiſe him for this Grace, if we could not certainly know our Sin is pardoned, and our Tranſgreſſion hid." It is this that makes us love our Saviour much, becauſe we know he has forgiven us much.

I do not doubt at all, that many Souls are ſenſible of a divine Work upon their Hearts, who feel often a Joy which a Stranger intermeddles not with,

and who are enlightened by the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and comforted much, who nevertheleſs cannot ſay, I know my Sins are forgiven; but then, let ſuch not reſt till they can ſay it; and if they are ſincere, and do not want to deceive themſelves, they will not reſt till all the Promiſes are fulfilled to them. They will not ceaſe to thirſt, and to beſeech our Saviour, like *Mary* at his Feet, till they have heard him ſay, "Go in Peace, thy Sins are forgiven thee;" or till they can ſing, "He has loved me and waſhed me from my Sins in his own Blood."

Unbelief can really hurt us in this and all other Matters of our Saviour's Kingdom; and I therefore pray all who hear me, not to encourage or ſuffer the Thought which claſhes with the Promiſes of God, or the Experience of ſuch who through Faith have obtained Pardon of their Sins and the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. What ſignifies all the Arguments brought againſt this Doctrine by carnal Men? Or why ſhould we be moved when they aſk How can it be? and endeavour to prove it impoſſible for us now to receive ſo great Mercy. If the Scriptures are not true, and the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians have been Deceivers, or if the Promiſes of our Saviour are no more to be depended upon and his Hand is ſhortened, and his Ways altered, then may we hear them who oppoſe this Truth; but if he be true, then let all who ſpeak otherwiſe be Liars; and as ſuch Promiſes are left us, let every one, with all his Heart, ſeek to make his Salvation ſure, and reſolve to ſink before the once-pierced Feet of God our Saviour with Prayers and Tears, till he has ſaid to us, as he did to the Woman in the Text, "Thy ſins are forgiven;" with a Confidence and Aſſurance of this, we can live happy in this preſent Life, and depart happy to the Life to come.

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This only can make us meet the King of Terrors valiently, and go in Peace through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, becauſe our Sins are forgiven us for his Name's Sake. God for Chriſt's Sake has forgiven us. Our Unrighteouſneſs is pardoned, and our Iniquities covered; we are bleſſed, yea we ſhall be bleſſed for ever, ſince God our own God and Saviour has been merciful to our Iniquities, and our Sin he will remember no more: He has caſt all our Sins into the Deep of the Sea, the Blood of the Lamb has waſhed them away. To him be Glory, and Salvation, and Praiſe, for ever and ever. Amen.

FINIS.

PRAYER.

PRAYER.

O Thou loving and merciful Saviour, who out of mere Pity to the Children of Men, once left thy everlaſting Throne and Glory, and was made Man for the Sake of dying and redeeming them out of their loſt Eſtate, be pleaſed ſtill to be gracious in the ſame Way, and abide the Friend of Sinners. Take me to be thy Child, and behold me at thy Feet like *Mary* begging for Mercy and Forgiveneſs, nor ſend me empty away for thy Name's Sake. I am a poor Sinner who owes thee much; for I have failed and ſinned in all I have done ever ſince I was born; I have no Righteouſneſs to plead, but as a guilty Criminal before the Bar, ſo ſtand I before the Judge of all the Earth, whoſe Eyes have tried and found me deſerving eternal Death: I have no Excuſe, I have been diſobedient and careleſs, I have defiled my Body and Soul, and am aſhamed to lift up my Head. Lord! I have nothing to pay, O freely forgive me all, and I will love thee much for ever and ever. Let thoſe ſharp and bitter Pains of thine eaſe my Heart, which elſe will be uneaſy Day and Night; let thy Wounds heal the moſt diſeaſed Soul that ever prayed to thee, and let thy bloody Sweat, and thoſe bleſſed Streams which flowed out of thy crucified Body, waſh me and make me clean. Say to me, thy Sins are forgiven thee, and let thy holy Spirit, whom thou haſt promiſed as the Comforter, aſſure my Heart that all my Sins are pardoned for ever, and ſhall no more come into thy Remembrance. Forgive me that I have been ſo careleſs hitherto of thy Salvation, and have ſo contented myſelf without God in the World; forgive my

my Indifference about my Part in thee, and my Coldneſs to thy Sufferings and Merits: O! have Mercy upon me, and let me go comforted and in Peace to the Grave. Be with me when my Strength fails me, and lay thy everlaſting Arms under my Head when I am departing this Life, be then nearer than ever, and let my latter End be better than the beginning. O do this, my dear Saviour, my Lord God and Redeemer, that I may bleſs thee and love thee eternally. Amen.

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